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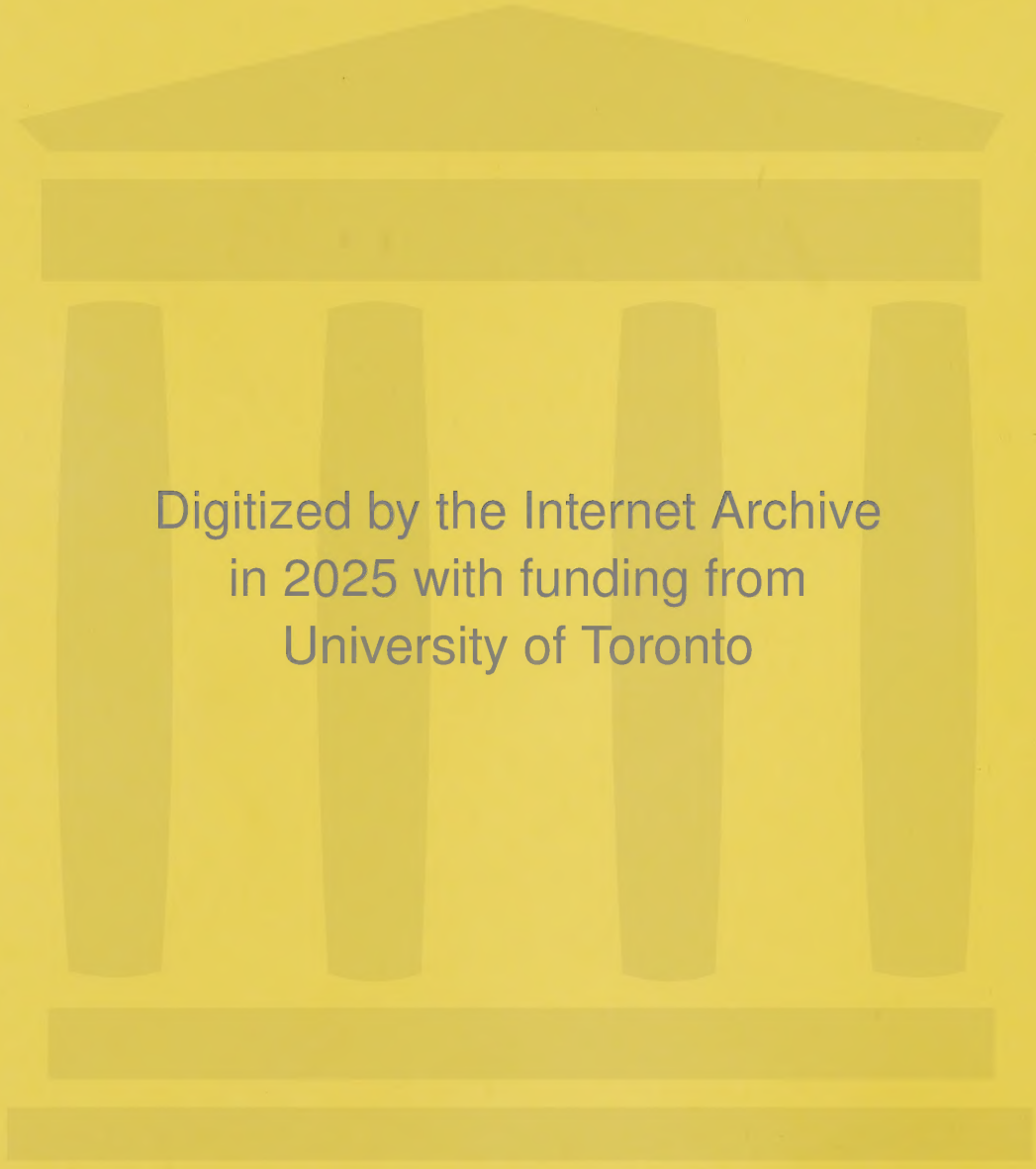

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THE CURWEN PRESS 1863 - 1984

An exhibition in the
Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library
University of Toronto
February - March 1987

Acknowledgements

Text: Alan Horne

Exhibition: Alan Horne, Linda Joy

Books and other material on display: Items in Case 1 are on loan from the Faculty of Music Library; other items are from the Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library or from Alan Horne's personal collection.

Cover design: Tom Reid

Poster design: Terry Correia

With special thanks to Philip Oldfield and Mary McTavish for advice on the guide; to Andrea Lennox for typing it at such short notice; and to staff at Photoduplication in the Robarts Library for printing it.

THE CURWEN PRESS: 1863-1984

Like many famous printing houses before it, the Curwen Press was established for a very practical reason. In 1841 the Reverend John Curwen, a young Yorkshireman, had been charged by a conference of non-conformist Sunday school teachers with the task of cultivating music and singing in the service of God. He recognized the value of music as a means of combatting the hopelessness in the lives of the majority of workers. Using an adaptation of the Tonic Sol-Fa system, a simplified method of musical notation, he taught music both to children and adults who could not afford to pay for formal teaching. This system became the foundation of an educational campaign based on music which was Curwen's brain-child and inspiration.

Curwen was appointed pastor at Plaistow in east London in 1844, and spent much of his time and energies there teaching his parishioners and spreading his Tonic Sol-Fa gospel. The printing of his notation and books which were full of unusual tables and signs caused a lot of trouble for printers. Manuals which applied the Tonic Sol-Fa notation to instruments were especially complex and troublesome to print. By 1863, exhausted by his efforts to get printers to produce what he wanted by the time he needed it, he set up his own publishing house, the Tonic Sol-Fa Agency, together with its subsidiary, the Tonic Sol-Fa Press (which later became J. Curwen & Sons and then the Curwen Press). Curwen's educational scheme and the use of the Tonic Sol-Fa system was incredibly successful and it soon proved to be a great advantage to have immediate control over the printing.

On Curwen's death in 1880, the Press was run by John Curwen's two sons, John Spencer Curwen and Joseph Spedding Curwen. Over the next twenty-five years or so, the Press established for itself a position of authority in the field of music printing and publishing. Although music was the principal output of the Press during these years, there was also a growing trade in "jobbing" printing, such as posters, letterheads, labels and business forms.

In 1908 Harold Curwen, Joseph's son, joined the firm and became manager of the Press in 1914. The earlier Curwens had little or no interest in design, but Harold had strong ideas in this direction, and in the years preceding the outbreak of the First World War he was able to plan a radical improvement of the Press, both in type faces used and in machinery. He discarded badly designed type and in its place introduced Caslon Old Face, Imprint and Goudy's Kennerley.

In 1918 Joseph Thorp began working as a consultant and salesman for the Curwen Press. He had design and sales experience with the Arden Press, whose printing works were managed by Bernard Newdigate. After Thorp met Harold Curwen at meetings of the newly formed Design and Industries Association, of which both were founder members, Thorp joined the Press and made himself the publicist-in-chief and began to find a new and wider audience for Curwen's printing.

One of Thorp's first acts was to persuade Harold Curwen to acquire a printer's device or trademark. The unicorn, a symbol of great strength and beauty, was chosen. Paul Woodroffe, a fine craftsman in stained glass and an

expert in lettering, designed the first of a series of unicorn devices. Thorp also persuaded the artist, Claud Lovat Fraser, to join the Design and Industries Association, and then introduced him to Harold Curwen. Lovat Fraser became an enthusiast for Curwen's bold and imaginative ideas on printing, while Curwen was captivated by Lovat Fraser's personality and artistic skills. In a remarkably short time, Curwen had acquired dozens of Lovat Fraser's bright and cheerful drawings and began using them in the Press's publications. The first advertising booklet on the Press itself, *Apropos the Unicorn*, was written by Thorp and most elegantly printed in 1920. The cover paper was designed by Lovat Fraser who also drew the unicorn on the title page, though Woodroffe's unicorn is printed at the end. In a section entitled "Appropriate Printing" Thorp writes--

> Good Printing must be appropriate printing. There is no formula to cover everything. I know a very distinguished press which will print a corset catalogue, historical records, and an invitation to dine with the Guild of Fishmongers, in precisely the same way. Very skillful and decorous and all that, but not appropriate; and, therefore, I would say not in the soundest sense good.

Elsewhere Thorp demanded: "Get the spirit of joy into your printed thing", and used Lovat Fraser's witty and colourful illustrations to convince the customer. These brightly coloured vignettes were freely used even in jobbing printing. An example of this is *A Great Step Forward*, a booklet advertising the comptometers made by the firm of Harold E. Robbins, which Curwen printed in 1920, using ten illustrations by Lovat Fraser.

Lovat Fraser's costume designs and sets for the London theatre were very well known, especially those he did for *As You Like It* and *The Beggar's Opera*. He illustrated many books as well, including *The Lute of Love*, an anthology of poetry, which was one of the first books printed by the Curwen Press. It was published in 1920 by Selwyn and Blount and contains many delightful decorations by Lovat Fraser. The Curwen-Lovat Fraser book triumph was *The Luck of the Bean-Rows* by Charles Nodier, published in 1921. The first issue of this was printed by the Westminster Press, but Curwen did a rush reprint of 30,000 copies. The illustrations are in colour and Harold Curwen was able to put to good use his experience of printing Lovat Fraser's work which made the Curwen edition even more attractive. This was a huge reprint and though the printing was very good, the publisher's optimism was not well founded as he was left with a mountain of unsold copies.

In 1920, Oliver Simon, nephew of the illustrator Albert Rutherston, was taken on as an apprentice at the Press. He was soon given a permanent position with a commission for any work he could bring to the Press, and shortly after, became responsible for overseeing the production of books printed at the Press. His first contribution to this relatively new kind of work was to secure the printing of *The Luck of the Bean-Rows* in 1921. Once he had established himself, Simon made it a rule that if the Press was to print a book for a publisher, the design was to be left entirely in his hands. Simon evolved a style in book design which became typical of the best Curwen books: it generally used the Walbaum typeface and provided margins, spacing and type size which were on a generous scale. Within ten years, Simon had seen through the Press some one hundred and fifty Curwen-designed books.

One of Simon's inspirations which sprang from his great interest in typography and book design was the editing and publishing of *The Fleuron, a Journal of Typography*. The first volume appeared in 1923 and was reviewed in the *Manchester Guardian* of 16 May 1923 in these terms: "irreproachable in manner and execution ... richly illustrated with rare examples." It was issued in two editions, the ordinary, and the deluxe, printed on Kelmscott handmade paper and containing additional material. The Curwen Press printed the first four volumes, but when the editorship was transferred to Stanley Morison, the remaining three volumes were printed at the Cambridge University Press. The Office of the Fleuron, established in the "respectable" West End of London, became Curwen's publishing and sales office until The Fleuron Ltd. was sold to the Soncino Press in May 1930.

Meanwhile Harold Curwen was devoting himself to the development and practice of the art of printing. In 1920 he commissioned many young artists, including Lovat Fraser, Albert Rutherston, Paul Nash, Edward Bawden and Eric Ravilious, to design pattern papers to be used for end-papers, book jackets and wrappers. New type faces were introduced and a series of printer's flowers and decorative borders were designed by Percy Smith, Edward Bawden, Paul Nash and Harry Carter. In 1926 Curwen introduced the stencilling method known as "pochoir" to the printing of book illustrations in England, and a fine series of books was produced by this process over a period of only six years, particularly those illustrated by Edward McKnight Kauffer and *Urne Burialle*, illustrated by Paul Nash, all magnificent examples of book making. In addition to undertaking the complete production of books illustrated in this way, the Press as the expert in this field printed just the illustrations of other books, while the text pages were produced elsewhere. Curwen did a lot of work of this sort for the Nonesuch Press.

In the 1930s, Harold Curwen reintroduced auto-lithography as a method of book illustration and encouraged artists such as Barnett Freedman, Graham Sutherland, Edward Ardizzone, Edward Bawden and Marion Dorn (who later married McKnight Kauffer) to draw directly on the stone. Although Harold Curwen was forced to retire from an active role at the Press in the late 1930s through ill-health, he was still in touch with "his" artists in the 1940s and advised Bawden on the best order of printing his lithographic colours, possibly with the printing of *The Arabs* in mind. *The Arabs*, a Puffin Picture Book, was itself the indirect outcome of Curwen's enthusiasm for auto-lithography. These Puffin books were first published in 1940, and out of 108 titles, sixty-three were lithographed at various firms, including the Curwen Press. The encouragement and employment that the Curwen Press gave in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s to a whole group of British artists was of great importance in the development of British book production.

Although the Curwen Press was a relatively small organization, by the early 1930s it had achieved a considerable reputation under the inspired leadership of Harold Curwen and the equally brilliant Oliver Simon. Some of the Curwen family nevertheless still considered the publishing of music to be the more significant part of the Press's work. It was agreed in 1933 that the two sides of the firm should separate and the Curwen Press was incorporated as a new company and the link with J. Curwen & Sons was finally broken. Kenneth Curwen, Harold's brother, took complete charge of J. Curwen & Sons, the music publishers, but the family lost control in 1969 when the company was taken over by Crowell Collier & Macmillan Inc., which also

owned G. Schirmer Inc. of New York, the U.S. agents for Curwen music. Harold Curwen remained as the head of the Curwen Press, Oliver Simon and his brother Herbert Simon joined him as directors, and O.R.G. Williams became company secretary with the responsibility of making the Press more efficient.

The 1930s became years of consolidation for the Curwen Press. The period of brilliant innovation was over, but with Oliver Simon's design and typographical skills at a peak, books of a very high quality continued to be produced and this kind of work became even more important to the Press. In 1931, *Sartor Resartus* was printed for the First Editions Club of New York and, during the years that followed, Curwen printed for the Club a whole series of fine books designed by Simon. These included Barnett Freedman's illustrated edition of *Lavengro* in 1936, where the artist used auto-lithography to great effect. Starting in 1935, Simon edited *Signature*, a new journal devoted to typography and the graphic arts. The Curwen Press printed it and it ran for fifteen issues ending in December 1940 as planned, despite the bombing and destruction of a large part of the works which left the Press with unbound sheets of the last issue exposed to the weather.

The quality and variety of the general printing completed during this period did not falter. Posters were produced for London Transport and for Imperial Airways (the forerunner to British Airways), and catalogues, books and booklets were published for Unilever, the Westminster Bank, the Southern Railway and many other clients. The war years were of course difficult for the Press, not only because of the damage and final destruction of the plant which was situated only a short distance from London's docks, an obvious target for bombs. Most of Curwen's artists were serving in the armed forces and the demand for fine work was necessarily limited. There were also severe restrictions on supplies, including paper which, when available, was normally of very poor quality. At the end of the war, the Curwen Press had to rebuild and totally re-equip its factory before production could start again. Despite these difficulties, the productions of the post-war decade remained of high quality. Eighteen numbers of the new series of *Signature* were published between 1946 and 1954; further titles were designed and printed for the Limited Editions Club; and other books printed included a fine four-volume bibliographical catalogue for Major J.R. Abbey.

Oliver Simon died in 1956 and his brother Herbert became head of the firm. Two major developments were launched in 1958, when Curwen Prints Ltd., and a photo-litho reproduction company, W.J. Vinson, Ltd., were established. Curwen Prints revived the practice of auto-lithography, and several distinguished British artists, including John Piper, Henry Moore and Ceri Richards, were commissioned to produce limited editions. The Vinson firm became the reproduction unit of the Curwen Press, even though traditional letterpress work continued to be undertaken. Fewer books were printed during the decade after Oliver Simon's death, and although many of these were privately commissioned, the Folio Society, Oxford University Press, Collins and other publishers were also important customers.

In 1964, a small London offset litho firm trading as Harleyprint was taken over. Four-colour offset machinery was introduced and a reputation for good lithographic printing was built up. Letterpress was still not altogether neglected and book printing enjoyed a revival.

After Herbert Simon's retirement in 1969, Basil Harley became head of the Press, which continued to produce good if unexciting work for another fifteen years. Mr. Harley wrote in 1979 that

> the Curwen Press ... despite the tendency to drab uniformity and standardization, has managed to retain its skill and an identity of its own. The developments that have taken place in order to provide a high standard of work at reasonable prices are not only necessary for the company's survival in a highly competitive world, they are also in keeping with the view of Harold Curwen that good work is not inevitably the most expensive ... The Curwen Press has always stood for quality and will continue to do so, but the quality must have relevance. Fitness for purpose is still the yardstick by which its achievements might be measured.

The survival of the Curwen Press was unfortunately not long-lasting, for in January 1984 it passed into receivership. Its largely irreplaceable stock of types was rescued from the melting pot in the nick of time by Ian Mortimer, with the help of Michael Heseltine of Sothebys. To do this, they had to buy the entire Curwen composing room, which included some twelve hundred cases of type, countless galleys of stored and standing type, six tons of type in pages and three case-racks of fleurons and borders. Two outstanding collections of Curwen publications also remain -- one in the Cambridge University Library, most of the items having been collected by Oliver Simon; and a collection in the University of Alberta Library of some 1,000 books, 2,400 pieces of ephemera and 800 issues of periodicals, made up from the Curwen Press's file copies of items printed between 1919 and 1956.

For forty years, from 1916 when Harold Curwen became head of the Press to 1956 when Oliver Simon died, the Curwen Press produced always good and often outstanding printed work. In an article on his brother, Herbert Simon attempted to assess the relative importance of Oliver Simon and Harold Curwen and came to the conclusion that they complemented each other:

> Certain it is that without the technical skill and real pioneering of Harold Curwen, Oliver Simon would have floundered; but the latter's achievements in book printing and editing have left an enduring memorial which Curwen's commercial work, splendid as it was, could never have conjured forth.

Please note: all books on display are printed by the Curwen Press unless otherwise indicated.

CASE 1: JOHN CURWEN AND THE TONIC SOL-FA

Son of a non-conformist minister and a teacher, John Curwen was born in 1816 at Heckmondwike, Yorkshire. In 1844, he became pastor at Plaistow, then a village to the east of London. He was persuaded to start teaching music by his fellow Sunday school teachers, and once he had committed himself to the task, developed a simplified system of musical notation, the Tonic Sol-Fa, the use of which eventually spread throughout the world. Education through music had already become a national movement when in 1870, elementary education was made compulsory in England. This gave a great fillip to Curwen's work and, at the time of his death in 1880, the number of adherents to the Tonic Sol-Fa system could be counted in hundreds of thousands. By 1890, it is reckoned that over two-and-a-half million elementary school children in Britain were being taught music by this method, and it had been widely adopted in other countries. It is still much used today, even appearing in such block-buster movies as *The Sound of Music* ("Doh, Ray, Me"--'Doe, a deer, a female deer') and *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* (the hand positions indicating notes are used as a way of communicating with the alien spaceship).

In 1863, John Curwen established the Tonic Sol-Fa Agency, a publishing company, together with its subsidiary printing plant, the Tonic Sol-Fa Press (later to become J. Curwen & Sons, and the, the Curwen Press), in order to get his music, books and guides printed on time. The company also encouraged and published new composers, folk music and choral music, and soon earned a reputation in the field of music publishing. The years from 1890 to 1916 made up the golden years for Curwen music.

John Curwen. *How To Read Music and Understand It.* London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1881.

John Curwen. *Musical Theory.* 7th edition. London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1898.

John Curwen. *The New How To Observe Harmony.* London: Tonic Sol-Fa Agency [1878].

John Curwen. *The Standard Course of Lessons and Exercises in the Tonic Sol-Fa Method of Teaching Music.* London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1900. (First published in 1858.)

John Curwen. *The Tonic Sol-Fa Edition of Songs and Tunes for Education.* London: Tonic Sol-Fa Agency [n.d.]

John Curwen and John Spencer Curwen. *Hours of Song.* London: Tonic Sol-Fa Agency [187-?]

John Spencer Curwen. *Memorials of John Curwen.* London: J. Curwen & Sons, 1882.

Gustav Holst. *St. Paul's Suite for String Orchestra.* London: [J. Curwen & Sons, n.d.]

Mrs. Curwen's Pianoforte Method. London: J. Curwen & Sons [1918].

The Musical Herald and Tonic Sol-Fa Reporter. 1889.

CASE 2: HAROLD CURWEN AND THE REVIVAL OF PRINTING

Although music was the principal output of the Curwen Press until at least 1925, there had been a growing trade in general "jobbing" printing since the turn of the century. Harold Curwen, John Curwen's grandson, took control of the Press in 1916 when his father, Joseph Spedding Curwen, died. Unlike his predecessors in the firm, Harold Curwen was concerned with the appearance of printed material and, being dissatisfied with the design work of the Press, set in motion a modernization programme. He possessed considerable technical skill and was most courageous in putting his ideas into practice, insisting that even "jobbing" work be well designed and well printed. He introduced many new typefaces to the Press, and commissioned artists to provide illustrations and decorations, including borders, fleurons and vignettes. Pattern papers were designed and printed at the Press to be used for wrappers, end papers and book jackets.

Harold Curwen. *Processes of Graphic Reproduction in Printing.* New edition. London: Faber, 1947.

Curwen Press. *Apropos the Unicorn.* London: Curwen Press [1920].

Written by Joseph Thorp, this is the first booklet advertising Curwen's printing work.

Curwen Press. *Type Faces in Use at the Curwen Press.* London: Curwen Press [n.d.]

Curwen Press. *A Specimen Book of Pattern Papers Designed for and in Use at the Curwen Press.* London: The Fleuron, 1928.

Herbert E. Robbins Ltd. *A Great Step Forward.* London: Curwen Press [1921].

An advertising booklet illustrated by Claud Lovat Fraser.

John Hilton and Joseph Thorp, editors. *Change: the Beginning of a Chapter in 12 Volumes.* London: The Decoy Press, 1919.

Printed and published by the Curwen Press, as the Decoy Press was in fact only Thorp's cottage. The title device is by Paul Woodroffe and it contains woodcuts by Eric Gill, Philip Hagreen, Robert Gibbings and others.

Herbert Simon. *Song and Words: A History of the Curwen Press.* London: Allen & Unwin, 1973.

CASES 3 AND 4: EARLY BOOK PRINTING AT THE CURWEN PRESS

In addition to music printing and "jobbing" printing, in the 1920s the Curwen Press began to establish a reputation for fine book production. Oliver Simon joined the firm in 1920 and was soon entirely responsible for overseeing the printing of all the books which the Press issued. He insisted that the design of every book Curwen printed be under his direct control, and he decided on the type face, page layout and paper. Harold Curwen was responsible for seeing the books through the press, and advised the printers and illustrators on any technical problems.

The Press's first great success in book printing was *The Luck of the Bean-Rows* in 1921, illustrated by Lovat Fraser. This was a brilliant start to a great number of fine books printed at Curwen. In *The Catalogue Raisonné*, which listed books printed by the Press between 1920 and 1923, Holbrook Jackson wrote: "It does not require more than a chance acquaintance with any of the books catalogued in the following pages to realize that something has happened in the making of books ... which is not only, at its best, beautiful as well as useful, but distinguished without being freakish."

The Ariel Poems. London: Faber & Gwyer.

A series of some forty poems separately published in the 1920s and 1930s, each illustrated by a well-known artist.

Baron de Besenval. *Spleen and Other Stories.* London: Chapman & Hall, 1928.

One of the series of twelve "Eighteenth-Century French Romances."

A Bibliographical Catalogue of the First Loan Exhibition of Books and Manuscripts Held by the First Edition Club. London: First Edition Club, 1922.

Charles Cotton. *Poems from the Works of Charles Cotton.* London: The Poetry Bookshop, 1922.

Selected and illustrated by Lovat Fraser.

Curwen Press. *Catalogue Raisonné of Books Printed at the Curwen Press, 1920-1923.* London: The Medici Society, 1924.

The Fleuron: A Journal of Typography. Vols. 3 & 4. London: The Fleuron, 1924-25.

Oliver Simon edited the first four volumes; Stanley Morison took over as editor for the last three, which were then printed by the Cambridge University Press.

Claud Lovat Fraser. *Sixty-Three Unpublished Designs.* London: First Edition Club [1924].

The illustrations were commissioned by Harold Curwen for an edition of Housman's *A Shropshire Lad*, but the poet inexplicably rejected the drawings.

A Garland of Elizabethan Sonnets. London: Leonard Parsons, 1923.

The Legion Book. London: Cassell, 1929.

Published to raise money for the British Legion, this book became the most substantial bookwork order Curwen had undertaken.

The Lute of Love. London: Selwyn & Blount [1920].

Charles Nodier. *The Luck of the Bean-Rows*. London: Daniel O'Connor, 1921.

Oliver Simon and Julius Rodenberg. *Printing To-Day*. London: Peter Davies, 1928.

The Song Book of Quong Lee of Limehouse. London: Allen & Unwin, 1920.

CASE 5: THE REVIVAL OF WOOD ENGRAVING

Noel Rooke was, to a large extent, responsible for the renewed interest in wood engraving in the early part of the twentieth century. He felt that a wood engraving should not be merely a copy of a drawing by another artist but should be designed by the artist, graver in hand, with incisions dictated by the medium. In 1912, Rooke began to instruct his students in wood engraving. Among his students were Vivien Gribble and notably Robert Gibbings, who was to become one of the central figures of the revival. Others soon took up this craft, and the foundation of the Society of Wood-Engravers in 1920 was a further encouragement. The first books illustrated with the "new" kind of engravings were published in 1915, and during the 1920s, wood engraving became one of the more common forms of book illustration in books which had pretensions of quality. Private presses, such as the Golden Cockerel Press and the Gregynog Press, often used wood engravings in their books, but few commercial printing houses could reproduce them satisfactorily. It was extremely difficult to achieve proper inking, to know when to dampen the paper to receive a perfect impression, and to machine-print at speed from the block. These were hard-won skills but printing from the wood became one of Harold Curwen's technical specialities and enthusiasms. The results were many fine books from the Curwen Press illustrated with wood engravings.

Ethel Armitage. *A Country Garden*. London: Country Life, 1936.

Wood engravings by John Farleigh.

Edward Gordon Craig. *Nothing; or, The Bookplate*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1925.

Contains 26 tipped-in engraved bookplates printed from line blocks.

Genesis. London: Nonesuch Press, 1924.

Contains twelve woodcuts by Paul Nash.

Robert Graves. *Welchman's Hose*. London: The Fleuron, 1925.

Illustrated by wood engravings by Paul Nash and bound in boards covered in pattern paper designed by Nash.

John Greenwood. *Twenty-Four Woodcuts of Cambridge*. London: John Lane, the Bodley Head, 1926.

John Keats. *Odes*. London: Duckworth, 1923.

With woodcuts by Vivien Gribble.

The Woodcut: An Annual. Volumes 1 and 2 are on display. London: The Fleuron, 1927-1930.

CASE 6: THE STENCIL, OR "POCHOIR", PROCESS

The stencil, or "pochoir", process was a method of reproducing colour illustrations. It was popular in France in the early 1920s but had not been used in England before Harold Curwen very successfully introduced it to the Curwen Press. These illustrations, hand produced by a team of stencillers with artist's pure water-colour or gouache over a printed base -- collotype, litho or gravure --have a freshness of colour still apparent today. For seven years, from 1926 to 1932, a small number of brilliantly successful books came from the Press. The number of copies printed of each book was small, of course, thus making the cost relatively high. The Depression of the 1930s brought this pioneering work to an end.

Martin Armstrong. *Saint Hercules and Other Stories*. London: The Fleuron [1927].

The first book in which Paul Nash's illustrations were stencilled.

Arnold Bennett. *Elsie and the Child*. London: Cassell, 1929.

Illustrations by McKnight Kauffer, stencilled in gouache.

Arnold Bennett. *Venus Rising from the Sea*. London: Cassell, 1931.

Here the McKnight Kauffer illustrations were stencilled in water-colour.

Sir Thomas Browne. *Urne Burialle*. London: Cassell, 1932.

An exquisite book with thirty stencilled illustrations by Paul Nash.

Daniel Defoe. *Robinson Crusoe*. London: Etchells and Macdonald, 1929.

Illustrated by McKnight Kauffer.

A. de Lamartine. *Graziella*. London: Nonesuch Press, 1929.

One of several books in which Curwen stencilled the illustrations (here by Jacquier) for Nonesuch but did not print the text.

Herman Melville. *Benito Cereno*. London: Cassell, 1926.

Illustrated in water-colour by McKnight Kauffer.

CASE 7: AUTO-LITHOGRAPHY

In auto-lithography, the artist draws directly on the stone, using a separate stone for each colour. It gives a great range and strength of tonality to an artist's work and allows for clarity and precision in delicate work.

In the 1930s, Harold Curwen re-introduced auto-lithography as a method of book illustration and encouraged artists such as Graham Sutherland and Barnett Freedman to use that process. Freedman became the finest exponent for the Curwen Press, although he had learned much of his skill from a great contemporary master of lithographic printing, Thomas Griffits of the Baynard Press, a friendly rival of the Curwen Press. Freedman wrote: "Nothing can take the place of an artist working in a medium which he thoroughly understands, producing marks on a flat surface, which go straight into the printing press."

Adrian Bell. *Men and Fields*. London: Batsford, 1939.

Includes six original lithographs by John Nash.

George Borrow. *Lavengro*. 2 vols. [New York] Limited Editions Club, 1936.

Illustrated with lithographs in colour and black-and-white pen drawings by Barnett Freedman.

Noel Carringon. *Life in an English Village*. (King Penguin No. 51.) Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1949.

Contains sixteen lithographs by Edward Bawden who also designed the cover.

The Curwen Press News-Letter. No. 10. London: Curwen Press, 1935.

Illustrates a book jacket designed by Barnett Freedman and printed in three colours.

The Curwen Press News-Letter. No. 12. London: Curwen Press, 1936.

The front cover is printed from an auto-lithograph by Graham Sutherland.

The Curwen Press News-Letter. No. 14. London: Curwen Press, 1937.

The front cover shows an auto-lithograph by John Nash.

Walter De La Mare. *Ghost Stories*. London: The Folio Society, 1956.

Auto-lithographs by Barnett Freedman and printed by the Curwen Press; text printed by Butler & Tanner.

Barnett Freedman. Proof pulls of the auto-lithographs for the Heritage Press edition of *Wuthering Heights*.

R.B. Serjeant. *The Arabs*. (Puffin Picture Book, No. 61) Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, [1947].

One of sixty-three titles in the series autolithographed by various firms. This was printed at the Curwen Press, with illustrations by Edward Bawden.

Signature. No. 2. London: Signature, 1936.

The stages in a five-colour lithograph by Barnett Freedman are shown.

M.G. Lloyd Thomas. *Travellers' Verse*. London: Muller, 1946.

Illustrated with original lithographs by Edward Bawden.

CASE 8: CURWEN PRINTING AFTER 1944

After the Second World War, the Curwen Press set to work to rebuild its factory, and when printing restarted, it was of the usual high quality. Eighteen issues of a new series of *Signature* were produced between 1946 and 1954, as well as books for the Limited Editions Club of New York and the Folio Society, art books for the Phaidon Press, exhibition catalogues and guides for National Trust properties. One of the finest productions was the four-volume bibliographical catalogue for Major J.R. Abbey.

Oliver Simon died in 1956 and his brother Herbert took control. The Press established Curwen Prints Ltd. and a photo-litho reproduction company, and in 1964, took over another offset litho firm. Books were still being printed for a number of publishers and many others were privately commissioned. In 1979, Basil Harley, the head of Curwen since 1969, complained of a tendency to "drab uniformity and standardization" and remarked that, though the Press still stood for quality, "the quality must have relevance." The ominous nature of these words did not give hope for a happy future and in January 1984 the Press went into receivership.

John Roland Abbey. *Life in England in Aquatint and Lithography, 1770-1860*. London: Priv. print., 1953.

John Roland Abbey. *Scenery of Great Britain and Ireland in Aquatint and Lithography, 1770-1860*. London: Priv. print., 1952.

Ariel Poems. New series. London: Faber, 1944.

Displayed are *The Winnowing Dream* by Walter De La Mare, illustrated by Robin Jacques, and *Mountains* by W.H. Auden, illustrated by Edward Bawden.

W.F. Critall. *A Metal Window Dictionary*. Braintree: Manor Works, 1953.

Edward Bawden: A Seventy-Fifth Birthday Exhibition. London: The Fine Art Society, 1978.

Edward Bawden was associated with the Curwen Press from 1925 when Harold Curwen commissioned him, while still a student, to illustrate a booklet called *Pottery Making at Poole*.

Mikhail Lermontov. *A Hero of Our Time*. London: The Folio Society, 1980.

The lithographs by Dodie Masterman were printed by the Curwen Press, though the text was the work of Western Printing Services, Bristol.

The National Trust.

In the post-war years, the Curwen Press printed many guides to National Trust properties. A selection is shown.

Signature. New series. London: Signature, 1946-1954.

John Sparrow. *Grave Epigrams and Other Verses.* Burford: The Cygnet Press, 1981.

EAST READING ROOM

A selection of books printed by the Curwen Press is exhibited here.

William Beckford. *Vathek.* London: Nonesuch Press, 1929.

Illustrated with colour lithographs by Marion Dorn.

Eighteenth-Century French Romances. London: Chapman & Hall, 1927-29.

Seven volumes of this series are on display, showing varieties of the Curwen pattern papers designed by Albert Rutherston.

Michael Knigen and Murray Zimiles. *The Contemporary Lithographic Workshop Around the World.* New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1974.

Illustrations of two prints from the chapter on Curwen Prints Ltd.

Jean Paul Raymond. *Beyond the Threshold.* [London] Priv. print., 1929.

The elaborate gold-tooled binding was designed by Charles Ricketts.

James Thomson. *The Seasons.* London: Nonesuch Press, 1927.

The text was printed by the Kynoch Press and the copper engravings by Jacquier were stencilled in water-colour at the Curwen Press.

The Woodcut: An Annual. Vol. 4. London: The Fleuron, 1930.

Shows a wood engraving by Leon Underwood.

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